

## Isobel Dorothy CATLEY– Kindergarten Teacher (Froebel Travelling Teacher Project)



Figure 1 Isobel Dorothy Catley ca. 1900. Private ownership

### TIMELINE

<b>Isobel Dorothy CATLEY</b>	
Birth	Birth 7.8.1879 Nelson Parents: J T Catley & Mary Catley, (nee Martin) 1880 June 15 <sup>th</sup> mother Mary Catley dies aged 41. Dorothy 9/12 months
Other names used	Married name – Mrs Alfred Roger Greenwood
Nationality	New Zealander
Schooling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary schooling: Nelson Girls College – achieves Matriculation</li> <li>• Nelson School of Music</li> </ul>
Travel	1898 (May 26) Travels to UK
Attends Froebel Educational Institute	Enrols FEI March 11, 1899 – achieves Higher Certificate distinction in Gifts & Occupations July 1900  Returns to New Zealand
Employment	1901 March, Teaching position at Miss (Mary) Richmond’s Kindergarten School, Wellington 1907-8 Holds position of responsibility in school

Wider educational involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secretary, Froebel Society 1900 -</li> <li>• Secretary, Richmond Free Kindergarten Union 1906 - 1909</li> </ul>
Marries	1909 June 23 at St Paul's in Wellington – marries Alfred Roger Greenwood (Roger)
1926	Leases Duart House, Havelock North for family home – later purchases.
1971	Dies aged 92

### **BIOGRAPHICAL FRAGMENT- Isobel Dorothy Catley**

New Zealander, Isabel Dorothy Catley (known as Dorothy) was just 20 years old in September 1898 when she set sail to Britain to enrol at the Froebel Educational Institution. In July 1900 she was awarded a Froebel Higher Certificate and later returned home to her family. In March 1901 she shifted to Wellington having gained a teaching position working in a private kindergarten school run by Miss Mary Richmond. A position she held for eight years before resigning in 1909 to marry. Dorothy Catley's work in education whilst brief, is embedded within a broader context of education and employment reforms and change for women.

Dorothy was born in Nelson on 7 August 1879, the youngest child of six and fifth daughters of James Thomas and Mary Catley, nee Martin.<sup>i</sup> James Catley worked for 40 years with the Lands Department mostly as the Receiver of Land Revenue. When just 10 months old Dorothy's mother died leaving five children, the eldest being Maud, aged 16 years. The children's father continued to care for them and did not re-marry. But it was Thomas Catley's long held community involvement in the establishment of Nelson's education system and belief in education reform that was significantly influenced both the nature of education the children received and significant social and educational links with families such as the large pioneer kinship of the Richmond, Fell and Atkinson families, strong advocates of progressive education for girls.

Dorothy's early schooling is unknown. Her older sisters attended a small private school run by Miss Milne a British teacher reportedly educated and trained by the educational reformist Miss Beale of the Cheltenham College for Ladies in London.<sup>ii</sup> Before Dorothy was old enough to follow her sisters to their school, Miss Milne accepted a teaching position at the newly opened Nelson Girls' College and her school was closed. Mr. Catley's choice of schooling for his daughters suggests he held leanings towards progressive models of education progressive ideals At a time when generally only children from well-off families received secondary schooling, it is notable that Dorothy and each of her sisters received secondary education at Nelson's newly established fee paying secondary school. Here the school united the Catley children with younger members of the close knit Richmond Atkinson, Greenwood and Fell families. Links that later were significant for the growing Dorothy.

It seems Dorothy was a studious and imaginative child. Family lore states, 'that when given a book Dorothy would climb a tree and read the book upside down,

“Because it lasted longer.”<sup>iii</sup> Dorothy successfully completed her secondary schooling through to matriculation and gaining prizes in English and Mathematics. Dorothy shared her father’s interest in music and attended Nelson School of Music where she gained a 2<sup>nd</sup> in Piano. In May 1898 19 year old Dorothy sails for England to study at the Froebel Educational Institute (FEI) and to visit family. In September 1898 she enrolls for a two-year course of study and in July 1900 gains the FEI Higher Certificate with distinction in Gifts & Occupations. Dorothy’s skill in drawing is testified in a Nature Workbook from this time and kept perhaps as a memento of her time at the FEI.



Figure 2 Sketch from Dorothy Catley 's workbook, 'Animals' ca.1900. Duart House Archives

Following her return to New Zealand, in early March, 1901 Dorothy wrote a letter to Wellington based Miss Mary Richmond, owner and operator of a small private kindergarten based school. The letter’s tone indicates some previous connection between the two.

Dorothy’s letter to Richmond begins with a reminder that she had been away for three years but now she was back and looking for a teaching position.

Agatha went to see Mrs Smith & told her that you were wanting another teacher next term, and she quite understood. I do not think she ever expected me to go to Miss Smith’s, as there is no kindergarten. So if you have found no one who suits you better & are willing to have me, I shall be very glad to come to you next term. Yours sincerely, .....<sup>iv</sup>

Mary Richmond must have agreed as Dorothy writes again on April 21, 1901.

‘I hope I shall prove satisfactory to you, after such a long holiday I am wanting to get back to work again before I forget things, though they [sic] probably come back after a short time.’<sup>v</sup>

Dorothy proves to be satisfactory and in turn found in Mary Richmond, a supportive and caring friend as well as employer. In 1907 Dorothy is entrusted to take charge of the school whilst Richmond takes an extended trip abroad. A position she held up until her resignation. Richmond encouraged Dorothy's involvement in Wellington's educational community acting as honorary secretary in two of Richmond's initiatives: establishment in 1901 of the Froebel Society and in 1905, formation of the Richmond Free Kindergarten Association.



**Figure 3** Group photograph of Mary Richmond and the children in her school. [ca 1908]. Dorothy Catley sits on the middle left of Mary Richmond. Richmond Family: Photographs of members of the Richmond, Atkinson, and Fell families. Ref: PAColl-6317-63. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. <http://natlib.govt.nz/record>

In the summer of 1909 Dorothy experienced two significant events, the death of her father on January 7th, and a proposal of marriage. In mid January Dorothy wrote to Mary Richmond with the news of her engagement.

Can you guess who to, I wonder. I don't suppose you can at all but who knows; in any way it is Roger Greenwood. We have been friends for many, many, years, which is a good introduction to this something more. <sup>vi</sup>

Dorothy Catley and Roger Greenwood married later that year. Mary Richmond and the Wellington kindergarten community, together with family members worked tirelessly to ensure Dorothy was both suitably farewelled and than married. At least three farewell events were held in her honour. Children too were involved in proceedings. On June 7<sup>th</sup> Mary Richmond hosted a children's party in her home to bid their teacher goodbye. An event duly reported in the local paper.

A crowd of little children dressed in white and crimson – the little girls in white fluffy frocks with sashes of crimson and crimson bows in their hair, the little boys in white with red belts. ... with them were a number of elder girls, old pupils of the school, also wearing the pretty school colours for the occasion, which was specially to be regarded as a farewell to Miss Catley, ... The drawing room and large hall were thrown into one, and there the children danced during the evening, breaking off every now and then to sing one of their charming songs, or to do a special dance for the entertainment of the of the grownups. <sup>vii</sup>

Richmond writing later in her diary noted that 125 people came to the party. It was, she wrote, 'a great success'.<sup>viii</sup>

Two weeks later on June 23, 1909, Dorothy married Roger Greenwood in a ceremony at St Paul's church in Wellington. Her only brother Ralph gave her away, and eight children from the school acted as her attendants – "four little boys and four little maids carrying posies of scarlet rata and viburnum, snowflakes, and maidenhair." Two hymns the children had learned at school were sung "the children 's voices rising clearly above the others."<sup>ix</sup>A reception followed, hosted by Mary Richmond.

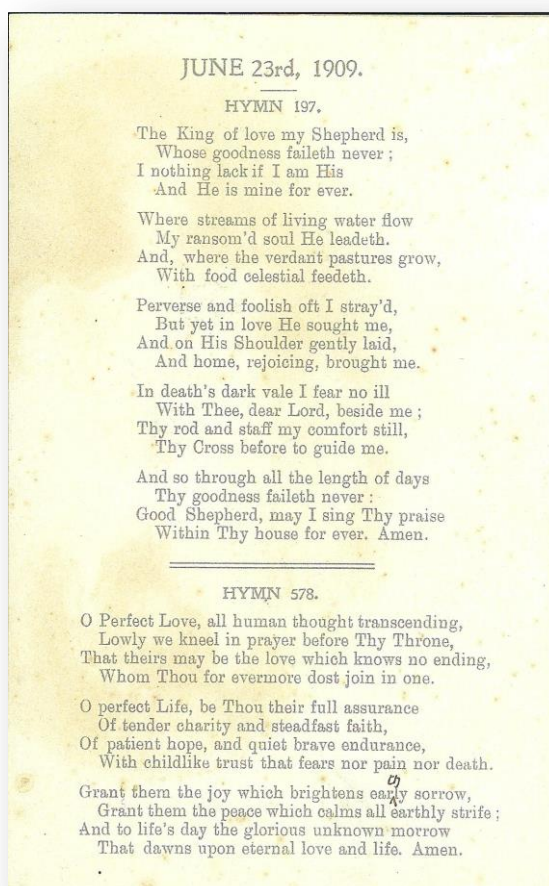


Figure 4 'Two hymns the children had learned at school were sung.' Hymns sung at the wedding of Roger Greenwood and Dorothy Catley. Greenwood Collection.

Dorothy and Roger lived at Urenui, Taranaki before settling in Havelock North where they leased and then purchased Duart House. The couple had five children. Dorothy remained in touch with Mary Richmond writing regularly into the 1940s. In a letter written on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1931 she writes she was now secretary for the Hastings Guide Association.

It does remind me of kindergarten days & what decided me to take it was remembering how you used to say women should do public things when their children were old enough. So, acting on that Aunt Mary dear, I have also consented to be on the Hastings Plunket Committee & the Havelock North Institute Committee.

Dorothy was also a membership of the Hasting's Pioneer Club, part of a nation body providing middle and upper class women with social and intellectual companionship. The first pioneer club was started in Wellington into 1909, with Mary Richmond as its first president. <sup>x</sup>



Figure 5 Dorothy Greenwood nee Catley in mid life. Personal procession

Links to other Froebel Travelling Teachers (FTT) biographical sketches:

- Olive Stace
- Mary Richmond
- Rachel Richmond (Compton-Smith)

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<sup>i</sup> Caroline Greenwood, correspondence, January 2016.

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- ii Ibid.,
  - iii Ibid.,
  - iv Dorothy Greenwood (nee Catley) Letters to Mary Richmond ATL 77-173-36/3
  - v Ibid.,
  - vi Ibid.,
  - vii 'Social and Personal', Dominion, 7 June 1909, 3
  - viii Mary Richmond diary 1909,
  - ix 'Wedding Greenwood-Catley' Colonist, 30 June, 1909, 6
  - x Dorothy Greenwood (nee Catley) – Letters to Mary Richmond, ATL 77-173-36/3

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